

5-10-1860

Richard Chenery. (To accompany bill H.R. no. 171.)

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RICHARD CHENERY.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 171.]

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MAY 10, 1860.

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Mr. SCOTT, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom the memorial of and bill No. 171, for the relief of Richard Chenery, were referred, report:*

That this claim is for compensation for one hundred thousand pounds of beef furnished the United States agents, at eight cents per pound, and by them fed to the Indians on Russian river and Clear lake, in the State of California, in the months of March and May, 1852.

The facts as set forth in the memorial and accompanying papers are clearly established, to wit: The Indians at that time were in a very turbulent condition, and it was only with the utmost exertion that an outbreak was prevented. They wanted and demanded to have large supplies of beef furnished them by Colonel McKee, the United States Indian agent—threatening hostilities and plunder on the white settlements if their demands were refused, as they were destitute of food to live upon; they had been removed from their favorite hunting grounds by the commissioner, and demanded the fulfilment of the obligations which the commissioner had entered into on behalf of the government. But Congress had failed to make any appropriations, and the department at Washington had consequently no funds on hand to meet these engagements. Colonel McKee, in view of the circumstances, stated the facts to Mr. Chenery, and solicited him to furnish the one hundred thousand pounds of beef required at that time for the use of the Indians, and to receive in payment his certificate showing the purchase, which certificate he assured Mr. Chenery the government would doubtless pay with promptitude. Mr. Chenery furnished the beef accordingly, and accepted the certificate from Colonel McKee, signed by himself as United States Indian agent and United States disbursing agent, which certificate accompanies the memorial, and certifies “that there is due to Mr. Richard Chenery from the United States the sum of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) for one hundred thousand pounds of beef delivered according to contract to Geo. P. Armstrong, temporary Indian agent for the tribes on Russian river and at Clear lake, as per said Armstrong’s receipts, dated March 23 and May 23, 1852, which amount shall be paid to said

Chenery, or his order, on return of this certificate, out of the first money that may come to my hand from the Indian department and applicable to such purposes;" signed R. McKee, United States Indian agent, and also disbursing agent for California.

There being no question that the beef for which compensation is claimed was furnished to the officers of the government in good faith, and applied successfully to prevent hostilities and a cruel war of extermination between the whites and Indians, in furtherance of the policy adopted by Congress, there can be no question that the government ought to pay for property so applied to public uses, and the committee accordingly recommend the passage of the bill.